

GREENSBORO PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, September 12, 2007 – 6:00pm

Lindley Recreation Center – 2907 Springwood Drive

PRESENT: John Beaman, Jr., Paul Brown (arrived 6:55pm), Marc Bush, Robert Douglas, III (arrived 6:11), Ken Free, Lori Galbreath, David Hoggard, Rose Marie Ponton, Randy Scott

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Candice Bruton, Cayce Chesson, Courtney Hemphill, John Hughes, Bonnie Kuester, Dan Maxson, Brooks Mullane, Lane Newsome, Eddie Pugh, Marcie Richardson, Mike Simpson, Laurie Thore, Chris Wilson

The regular meeting of the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Commission was held at Lindley Recreation Center. David Hoggard, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the July 11, 2007 Commission Meeting were approved as submitted.

Recognition

Bonnie Kuester, Director, recognized the Parks and Recreation August Employee of the Month, Dee Scott and September Employee of the Month, Casey Chesson. Casey Chesson was also recognized as the NCRPA Young Professional of the Year recipient. Kuester also recognized Robert Douglas, III for his years of service on the Parks and Recreation Commission Board. Hoggard recognized Bonnie Kuester as the NCRPA Meritorious Service Award recipient.

David Hoggard took prerogative of the Chair and stated that the Commission would now hear the Boy Scout Eagle Projects presentation.

Boy Scout Eagle Projects

Brooks Mullane, Program Support Supervisor, stated that she is very pleased and honored that two boy scouts completed their Eagle projects in Fisher Park and Johnson Park. These were very visionary projects and they should be admired for their drive to complete the project under some difficult conditions. Information regarding the Fisher Park project, under the leadership of Will Copeland, was distributed to the Commission. Baxter Sapp, leader of the Johnson Park project, created a web album. Mullane then turned the presentation over to the boy scouts for comment.

Sapp stated that he created a french drain system where the basketball court is located at Johnson Park. Over time, the court has sunken into the ground and water collects in a way that it gathers in one corner area of the park and stays for 3-4 days. This project was to break the ground, which was mostly clay, and put in a drainage system. The system now effectively drains all the water after a very large rain in less than 30 minutes.

Copeland stated that he built a stairway at the corner of South Park Drive and Elm Street in Fisher Park. Copeland stated that Mullane helped him get materials. Eight steps that weighed about 600 lbs. each was put in and we moved 22,000 lbs. of rock. It took 257 hours to complete the project over the summer with the help of 31 boy scouts. When the townhouses were built across the street water started to collect. The old pathway was removed and a gully was made because it was being used as a pathway which caused erosion to the hillside and flooded that region of the park. When it rains again there shouldn't be any erosion or flooding.

On behalf of the department, Kuester thanked the boy scouts. Kuester stated to the boy scouts that they are doing things for us that the department can not do for many reasons, financially and otherwise. It is a great accomplishment and means a great deal to us as an organization, but obviously to the citizens for what you've done to correct damage and problems. We have a lot of those kinds of problems in many of our parks and we are not able to fix them because of resources. Any time we have fine young men and women come forward and want to do these kinds of projects we are thrilled as we are able to share the opportunity for you to work with us and we have the privilege of working with you.

Lindley Recreation Center Presentation

Casey Chesson, Lindley Recreation Center Director, presented the Commission with historical information about Lindley Recreation Center, the boxing club, and programs currently held at the center.

OLD BUSINESS

Friends Foundation

Due to unexpected circumstances, David Hoggard took prerogative of the Chair for this item to be presented later during the meeting.

Sportsplex Update

Lane Newsome, Sportsplex Manager, came before the Commission a couple of months ago stating that the Sportsplex would be sending request for proposals (RFP's) for the fitness center. Newsome stated that the RFP process is complete and one bid was received from The Rush. City Council approved a 15 year contract for the fitness center. Newsome thanked Douglas and Kuester for their assistance with that approval. The Rush is coming into the facility as their fifth location in Guilford County. It was hopeful The Rush could begin in September but there are delays getting this through legal.

Newsome stated that the soccer contract went out for RFP's and 2 bids were received, one from Soccer Ops and the other from Greensboro Youth Soccer (GYS). Two rounds of interviews were conducted with both parties and both could have done a great job as they both had their strengths. Newsome thanked Rose Marie Ponton, Ken Free and John Hughes for their efforts with this process. The contract was offered to Soccer Ops. Newsome stated that the main decision maker was that Soccer Ops offers training for kids from all the soccer clubs in the area, including GYS, Guilford United and soccer clubs in High Point, Jamestown and Winston-Salem. They provide training for these kids to come together and train with people of similar talent, then the kids go back to their individual clubs and compete in recreation child soccer programs. .

Rose Marie Ponton added that she felt Soccer Ops helped the whole program there and felt like they had done an excellent job, would continue to do so and give them 3 more years to really see how they do, especially since they are open to all the clubs in the area.

John Hughes stated that he agrees with Ponton.

Marc Bush, Commissioner, stated that he is probably in the middle of all of this, but had learned about the selection from GYS. GYS has a new executive director since this process started. Bush stated that he is comfortable with the selection but GYS felt that there were people upset about them operating their soccer program from there. Bush stated that he encourages them in 3 years to be back in front of us, as they have made a lot of improvements in their operation over the last 2-3 years.

David Hoggard took prerogative of the Chair and stated that the Commission would now hear the Friends Foundation presentation.

Friends Foundation

Courtney Hemphill, Resource Development Coordinator, distributed a member list of the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Friends Foundation. Hemphill thanked Rose Marie Ponton and Robert Douglas, III for their efforts to establish the foundation. Currently, we are getting ready to file our 1023 form with the IRS so that we can officially have our 501(c)(3) designation to become officially non-profit. We should receive notification of this by the end of the year as it normally takes 3 months.

Hemphill continued stating that at the last board meeting the board adopted 2 projects. The Fun for All Playground located at Hagan-Stone Park which has a committee that has been working towards raising funds in order to have an all accessible playground. In total they have received \$1,250 thus far. The second project adopted was the All Person Nature Trail located at Country Park and is in the process of establishing a budget.

Hemphill stated that last week she worked with Gary Brown and Adrienne Byrd to assist them with funding for the David Caldwell archeology project. This is currently in a holding pattern for funding until we get our designation; however we have located a couple of other avenues that may be a possibility in the mean time. We looked at funding from the Marion Stedman Foundation and talked with someone from this Foundation who said they are very excited about this program, the project and how it fits with their funding components. We'll be able to apply in the spring cycle of this program.

The next Friends Foundation meeting will be held Wednesday, October 3, 2007 at the new David Caldwell Historic Park. Our focus will be our first fundraising project, a 2008 kick off of the first annual fundraising event and how we will market the Friends Foundation.

Marc Bush stated there are a lot of different fundraisers going on and inquired if that is communicated.

Kuester replied stating that we initially shared with Greensboro Beautiful what the Friends Foundation is because we didn't want them to think that we are trying to compete with their Gateway Garden Fundraiser. The Friends Foundation is long-term, so it is a different type of situation that is inclusive of the entire department. Greensboro Beautiful runs their campaigns separate from everything else.

Hemphill added that she has been working with Kathy Cates to keep the lines of communication open and we have good rapport with the board as well.

Douglas added that getting a charitable non-profit organization is not the easiest thing to do and there are a lot of hoops to jump through.

Barber Park Update

Chris Wilson, Parks, Gardens, and Program Support Manager, stated that this presentation will be presented by Eddie Pugh, Barber Park Manager.

Pugh stated that testing had been done and one of the metals found was Trivalent Chromium, which is a form of little health concern. According to the toxicologist The Total Petroleum Hydrocarbon (TPH) levels were below guidelines established to protect the public from direct exposure. It is less likely to move in the environment and is of very little public health interest. There are 2 different types of chromium. The type found occurs naturally and is pretty much everywhere.

Pugh continued stating that 2 outside agencies were hired with toxicologists from companies called Hazardous Substance and Waste Management Research out of Tallahassee, Florida and Trigon Engineering Consultants, a local testing firm. After several meetings it was agreed that it would be best for everyone to meet on site at Barber Park. These companies were sent air photography of Barber Park from when it was a waste treatment plant area to present. A previous waste treatment plant employee was involved and knew where the buildings were located and what was

used on site. We met on August 23, 2007 and test sites were determined. More intensive testing would be done on the construction site which has been fenced off since June 15, 2007. It was also decided to test other areas in the park. On September 4 and 5, 2007 sampling was taken on the construction site. On September 10, 2007 sampling was taken at other sites around the park. These sites include the Florida Street park area where the basketball slab is located, the baseball stadium, the area around the pavilion, the area around the maintenance building and the area around the amphitheater. We are now waiting on the results from these tests. When these tests come back the toxicologist and testing firm will put together a report that will be presented in a public forum where the testing firm and toxicologist will be present and will provide documentation.

Pugh stated that a contractor has been hired to remove the stock pile and dispose of it properly.

Randy Scott inquired if the park is safe.

Pugh replied stating that he can't say at this point because he doesn't have the test results.

Wilson added that the initial tests did indicate that the type of materials that were found is not of public concern or a public health concern. Testing is being done very thoroughly for public safety. If the initial tests are any indication of what we might look forward to then I think we can be positive about the outcome.

Pugh stated that when final results are back a report will be put together and it may tell us we need more testing elsewhere. This is all driven by Environmental Services and if there's a need to test another area we'll be testing another area. The end result is we want to make sure the park is safe and that we have documentation that it's safe.

Wilson added that the state is involved so any report that is generated the state will have to approve and if they're not satisfied we may be directed to do more.

Marc Bush inquired as to who gives the final approval to open the park.

Wilson stated that he believes the state will have to give approval first.

Rose Marie Ponton stated that going the long mile we will be assured that whatever you want to do at the park in the future you know what's there and you'll have that behind you.

Pugh stated that the lady who worked at the waste treatment plant said that there have been a lot of things discussed about chemicals and she was upset because she knew what had gone on at the plant and that didn't happen.

David Hoggard inquired as to the cost of the testing.

Kuester stated that the cost is \$125,000 thus far.

At this time Robert Douglas, III excused himself from the meeting. He stated that he has enjoyed working with everyone and that John Beaman, Jr. would be more than adequate replacement and probably much better. Douglas thanked everyone for all the assistance and cooperation as he served as Chairman and thoroughly enjoyed it.

NEW BUSINESS

Neighborhood Small Project Program

Candice Bruton, Planning and Project Development Manager, stated that Commissioners received in their packets the 2008-09 Neighborhood Small Project Application and Guidelines for the program. Bruton stated that several months

ago Russ Clegg from Housing and Community Development came before the Commission to talk about the last funding cycle and the projects that were recommended for funding. A new funding cycle has begun and applications are due October 31, 2007. The program is a \$100,000 fund that is available to neighborhood associations and community groups for capital improvements to parks, medians, and other city owned areas. Some of the projects seen in the past are new playgrounds, neighborhood signs, trash receptacles, dog waste stations and pedestrian foot bridges over streams. It's a really great avenue for neighborhood associations to make improvements in their communities. The project must be on city owned property and must be a capital project (an actual physical improvement), master planning efforts in order to qualify. The application is fairly user friendly; however it has a couple of really important components with one of them being the community support piece. The community applying has to do a lot of foot work with their neighbors to make sure everyone is in agreement to the fullest extent with the proposed project. Once the application is received various different departments, Police, Parks and Recreation, GDOT, Engineering, Stormwater, and 2 citizens sit on the committee who review applications and make recommendations from the city's perspective about which projects to fund. Then the Parks and Recreation Commission and Planning Board is asked to give recommendation to City Council. Bruton stated that applications are available through Housing and Community Development or herself. There is not a cap on how much a project can be in terms of the application, but we always make it known that it is \$100,000 total. Some years we've gotten up to 12-14 applications, last year we received 5-6.

Boy Scout Eagle Projects

This item was presented earlier in the meeting.

Nominating Committee Report

David Hoggard, Randy Scott and Paul Brown volunteered to serve on the Nominating Committee in order to nominate a Chair and Vice-Chair for 2008. This committee will bring forth its nominees and a vote will take place during the next Commission meeting.

New Commission Member (not on agenda)

Hoggard recognized John Beaman, Jr. as a new Commission member who was appointed by City Council Member, Tom Phillips to fill the seat of Robert Douglas, III.

Beaman gave a brief biography and stated that he looks forward to working with everyone and is here to support this group and is a firm believer in Parks and Recreation.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

- NONE -

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Bonnie Kuester, Director, informed the Commission of the upcoming Flying Frog Race event. Kuester then directed attention to Mike Simpson, Lakes and Trails Supervisor, for further information about the race.

Simpson stated that this race is one of the most unique and diverse challenges we offer and is supported by most who come from multi-states who participate in team and individual solo competition with a variety of rowing, mountain biking and running. It's a unique and growing activity and we see our numbers increasing every year.

Kuester continued stating that the Gateway Gardens groundbreaking will be held on Saturday, September 29, 2007. On Saturday September 22, 2007 the Serenity Falls at the Bog will be named for Joe Christian. Kuester stated that she will be attending our National Recreation and Park Association Congress where Kathy Cates, her staff and a Greensboro Beautiful representative, Elaine Stover, will be recognized for a national voluntary service award for the

best voluntary service in the country this year. We fully know in our department as everyone in the city knows that there is no better organization in terms of volunteers and their commitment to our community. We're honored to receive that award.

Kuester thanked Rose Marie for bringing to her attention that we may need to review the Parks and Recreation Naming Facility Policy. Perhaps a subcommittee of the Commission can review the policy since there have been some special circumstances, such as where a park area at the corner of Friendly and Green Valley brought forth by Ron Wilson and when John Marks came before us regarding naming a park after his father, Dr. Marks. These were things that happened for very specific and special reasons and we have waived the policy at times. Perhaps we need to say in the policy that there is an opportunity for waiving the policy. Generally our policy is that naming requests do come before the Commission and ask for something to be named, then get a petition of a certain number of people and we post that property so people have an opportunity to see the request and have the opportunity to oppose to come to the next Commission meeting and explain their opposition.

John Beaman and Rose Marie Ponton will serve on the Naming Facilities Policy review committee.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Lori Galbreath recommended that beginning in 2008 the Commission meetings be held at one consistent place. Galbreath stated that she is a frequent visitor of the Farmer's Market and commended Market staff for their efforts with the Market.

Ken Free commended staff for their efforts with the Citizen Board Member Forum.

Rose Marie Ponton stated that she thought the Citizen Board Member Forum was a great conference this year. Ponton welcomed Beaman to the Commission.

Randy Scott congratulated Kuester on her award.

Marc Bush stated that we have a fence to mend with GYS and feels we need to be proactive and figure a way to help them as they are not happy. Bush stated that Chris Wilson has been informed that the USA Track and Field Masters Cross Country National Championships will be held next fall at Hagan-Stone Park. Improvements will be made to the course. Hagan-Stone Park continues to get great accolades nationally from the events that they are hosting. Bush stated that we have some bids for 2009 and believes we'll get it.

Per the request of Tracy Pegram at Bur-Mil Park Bush stated that we're hosting the Cycle North Carolina event, sponsored by North Carolina Amateur Sports. This is a cross the state bicycle tour, not a race. The tour will start in West Jefferson then to Elkin, to Bur-Mil Park on Monday, October 1, 2007 with a final destination of Knotts Island. Bush continued informing every one of logistics of the tour.

Bush thanked Laurie Thore and Jean Jackson for their efforts on the job they did on August 1, 2007 with the Russians National baseball team. Thore was contacted by them one late evening and the next day they were playing at our War Memorial Stadium against a college all star team. This is another indication of why War Memorial Stadium is so valuable.

Paul Brown welcomed Beaman. Brown stated that there were 2 articles on our Starmount Park property which was very complementary from the News & Record. Another item in our paper often is the pending annexation. Brown requested some projections and the financing of the annexation. Brown suggested to have half of the Commission meetings at the same place and the other 6 in various locations alternately every other month and continue to go to some of our recreation centers. This will give people in surrounding neighborhoods a chance to come and speak.

David Hoggard stated that he lives in the Aycock district and a car had struck the brick sign off of Summit Avenue and does Parks and Recreation or GDOT maintain the sign?

Brooks Mullane stated that the insurance company of the person who hit the sign should pay to have it rebuilt.

With no further business Hoggard adjourned the meeting at 7:19 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcie Richardson, Executive Assistant
Greensboro Parks and Recreation